



## University of Portsmouth Covid-19 Research Degrees Impact Statement

### ***Context and purpose***

The University of Portsmouth recognises the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on PGR students. Students are expected to adapt their research activities to mitigate, as far as possible, the disruptions caused by Covid-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, the impact of disruptions on the research may merit explanation either within the thesis itself or through the submission of a COVID-19 Research Degrees Impact statement. Examiners should consider the student's *Covid-19 impact statement* in relation to the scope and volume of the research student's work whilst always upholding the academic requirements for a research degree award ([UoP Research Degree Regulations](#)). The quality threshold for the award remains unchanged and there must be no compromise in the integrity of the examination or the award, but examiners are invited to consider aspects of the research design and execution where effort was made or was intended, but which subsequently had to be discarded because of COVID-19, and the effect on the work of that mitigation.

This policy<sup>1</sup> applies to any thesis submissions where students were active during the time of the pandemic (including resubmissions made during this time) and covers the following research degrees:

- Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Medical Doctorate (MD)
- Professional Doctorates (PDoc) including the DBA, EdD, etc.
- Integrated Doctorates

### ***Option to include a Covid-19 impact statement***

The University recognises that the pandemic is likely to have had multiple impacts on the type and quantity of PGR students' work, as well as on their mental health and well-being. Any PGR student affected by the pandemic who submits a thesis may include a Covid-19 impact statement in the format set out below. A statement is not compulsory and should only be included where a PGR student wishes to highlight the impact of the pandemic and the steps taken to adjust their research activities.

The Covid-19 impact statement can be submitted (i) as a cover note submitted to the examiners to accompany the thesis, or (ii) as part of the thesis itself between the abstract and the author's declaration.

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<sup>1</sup> Please this policy is adapted from the KCL policy and is used with permission.

PGR students should discuss the inclusion of a Covid-19 impact statement with their supervisory team and draft the content together<sup>2</sup>, but the decision to include the statement ultimately rests with the student. Equally, if submitted as part of the examined thesis itself, the student will decide if the statement will be included in the final version of the thesis deposited with the library<sup>3</sup>.

The submission of a Covid-19 impact statement should not prevent the student from discussing any issues that arose within the methodology section (or equivalent) of their thesis.

### ***Content of the Covid-19 impact statement***

The Impact Statement should not exceed 200 words and could include the following information:

- Details of how disruption caused by Covid-19 has impacted the research, for example, an inability to collect/analyse data as a result of travel restrictions, restricted access to research facilities/material (e.g., laboratories, patients/hospitals, libraries, archives)
- A description of how any planned work that has not been conducted would have fitted within the thesis' narrative (e.g., through method development, development of analytical skills or advancement of hypotheses)
- A summary of any decisions / actions taken to mitigate any work or data collection/analyses that were prevented by Covid-19.

The Impact Statement should not include the following information:

Issues arising from illness, disability, bereavement, or any exceptional circumstances not related to disruptions to research activities caused by the pandemic.

In other words, the statement should focus on changes to the thesis as a result of Covid-19. Whilst a range of personal circumstances may have influenced the impacts, these do not need to be described. In addition, such factors may also have been addressed through other mechanisms, such as extensions and interruptions of studies.

### **Examiners' Notice:**

Examiners will be provided with the Covid-19 mitigation notice as below if the student submits a Covid-19 impact statement:

Examiners should consider the submitted Covid-19 impact statement in relation to the scope and volume of the research student's work but should always assess the thesis and the student at the oral examination using the criteria as set out as in the [University of Portsmouth Research Degree Regulations](#). Examiners should consider whether the quality

<sup>2</sup> If the student and supervisory team cannot agree on the content of the Covid-19 impact statement, the matter should be mediated by the local DRDC.

<sup>3</sup> If the statement is included as part of the thesis it will not form part of the overall word count.

of the ideas and work meet academic standards while taking account of any potential limitations on the research conducted due to Covid-19 restrictions. The quality threshold for the award remains unchanged and there must be no compromise in the integrity of the examination or the award, but examiners are invited to consider aspects of the research design and execution where effort was made or was intended, but which subsequently had to be discarded because of COVID-19, and the effect on the work of that mitigation.

Where the examiners ask the student to submit minor or major corrections, they should be guided by the COVID-19 Research Degrees Impact statement as to what is achievable within the time provided.